with an ample supply of sun-light throughout the day, and of gas-light at night, as an almost indispensable appurtenance of a well-organized lodging-house for females.

On the preceding measures, and on others calculated to equalise the demand for some kinds of manual labour, and to ensure to its products a more direct transit from the producer to the consumer, I shall perhaps have, at some other time, an opportunity of entering into further detail; I shall perhaps then endeavour to point out in what manner they might either be adapted to that condensed form which concentrates so many valuable architectural and economic lessons, in the model buildings of the Labourer's Friend Society, or be carried out by the directors of the Metropolitan Association under Royal charter, on a scale of development commensurate with the vast resources which will, I doubt not, be readily placed at their disposal by capitalists, if the latter be properly appealed to, while the fickle breeze of public sympathy is blowing fresh in favour of philanthropic investments.

Twickenham. T. T.

THE ITALIAN OPERA HOUSE, COVENT GARDEN.

WE mentioned briefly a short time since, that a great improvement was being effected in the upper part of the auditory, by removing the floor which separated the amphitheatres and the gallery, and forming one general incline, which, under the titles of "box stalls" (the front portion) and "amphitheatre," will give good accommodation to about 600 persons at a moderate price. The appearance of the house is little injured by it; indeed, it gives an effect of space and extent which it had not before. Its recommendation to us, however, is that of providing the opportunity of hearing the finest productions of the finest composers, given by a company not to be equalled in Europe, for those who may not be able prudently to pay large prices for the enjoyment. We would have music as universally cultivated in this country as we would have design: the enjoyment of both is open to the meanest capacities and to the humblest individuals, and we look for the time when it will be considered not a luxury but a necessary, and all be qualified and able to receive it. As was said to Mr. Wyse by an intelligent foreigner, when some doubts were expressed of the possibility of generally diffusing these arts in England: "Music! why music is speaking: Drawing! drawing is writing: both are pastimes only of the common education of every human being."

Several other improvements have been made at the Opera-house under the able direction of Mr. Frederick Gye, (who is now the general comptroller there), especially at the entrances, arrangements for giving back cloaks, &c., speedily;—little matters not beneath the attention of architects who would adapt their buildings perfectly to their destined purpose.

PROGRESS OF THE GAS MOVEMENT.

IN so rapidly accelerating a ratio is the gas movement making way, that the necessarily restricted limits devoted to such a subject in THE BUILDER are getting less and less capable of keeping pace with it, even in the briefest record of each and all of its fastcoming minor phases and events; so much so, in truth, that we feel not a little like that worthy wight who raised a regiment of aerial imps, whose *gaseous* forms he forthwith found it far beyond his power to order and dispose of as he wished. We must, however, make at least an energetic and industrious effort to condense as many of them within the limits circumscribed as possible, leaving as many more, it may be, to pirouette upon the point of our Perryan penholder until further orders.

It is scarcely news, to most of our metropolitan readers at least, to intimate now that in London, Lambeth, Kennington, Camberwell, Marylebone, and, in fact, the metropolis at large, the movement downward in price—but upward in prosperity, as we have prophesied before—has fairly begun. The Phœnix, the City of London, and the South Metropolitan, no less than the Imperial and the Chartered Companies already referred to,—all, more or less recently announced a forthcoming reduction of price to 6s. per 1,000 cubic feet; so that what was lately an average metropolitan price of 7s. to 8s., has been already pretty well reduced to 6s., and, in all probability, will, ere long, step further downwards towards the level of public expectation, pitched, as it latterly has been, on the tangible, practical, and explicit basis of Mr. Leslie's evidence of possibilities—namely, 3s., more or less. Alarmed at the movement of the City Sewers Commissioners, and the evidence thus adduced, the City Gas Company have followed the example of others—in *so far* doing what we have so often urged them all to do, even for their own sakes.

Since our last abstract of progress, too, in the provinces, the movement downwards in price has been general. At Woolwich, for instance, not only have the Admiralty obtained a reduction of the charges on their extensive establishment to 6s., but a general reduction to 5s. 6d. has been since announced, along with a notice of increase of dividend to 6 per cent. As the *Daily News*, in announcing this reduction, justly remarks, the beneficial effects of a well-timed competition have been strikingly exemplified in this very case. For many years the charges of the old company were 15s., which, by stiff struggles, were reduced at length to 13s., and then to 11s., when further they declared it impossible to move, until the actual formation of a new company jogged them onward to 9s., which they at the same time declared to be a ruinous price. The new company, however, having been notwithstanding fairly set afloat, with a charge of 8s., to begin with, down came the *ruined* Company—not to a state of bankruptcy, exactly, but—to a general charge of 6s.! The tradesmen preferred paying 8s. to their *own* company, nevertheless, until a stipulated guarantee fund of 1,000*l.* was realized, when the reduction announced, to 5s. 6d., was made, and the dividend, notwithstanding, as we have said, increased,—thus literally fulfilling our repeated prophecy, that with a downward price, we shall see an upward dividend, as indeed the whole of the returns already made to Parliament also evidence, and as the more especially parallel case at Liverpool,—so like in its detail to that at Woolwich,—also gives remarkable proof. In that case, if our readers recollect, the company, after being literally *pulled down* from 45s. to 15s., 12s. 6d., 8s., and 7s., declared that it was *utterly impossible* to make gas at a lower price,—then to 5s., when there was another dead stop, as *it* was declared to be *a losing price*,—then down to something less than a losing price, viz., 4s. 6d., which their own 'chief clerk' at length, in evidence, declared to be a very good reason why they should—raise it again? by no means, but—reduce it even to 3s. 8d.! And, in truth, the *ruinous*, losing, and impossible prices actually realised the highest dividend allowed by their acts, viz. 10 per cent., which was shortly afterwards announced! and that, too, in the face of a constant rise in the price of coal!! But our present purpose is neither retrospective, argumentative, nor illustrative, but simply registrative. We must, therefore, proceed with our record of progress.

While the people at Newark are paying 7s. 6d. to the Company there, the Midland Railway Company, in the same locality, are now manufacturing the article at less than 2s. 6d.! These elements of discontent are rapidly fermenting into a new leaven at Newark.——The Huddersfield registered Company have announced a reduction to 5s.; the Bradford a like reduction from 6s. to 5s.; the Cambridge a like reduction from 8s. to 7s. (Here the Improvement Commissioners as well as the consumers, have caught the infection of discontent, chiefly in consequence of observing that "there has been a most important reduction lately in many large places"). At Basingstoke, Romsey, Salisbury, Whitehaven, et multis aliis, also, deductions have been made of one, two, and even three shillings at once: at Whitehaven it appeared, that "notwithstanding the reduction that took place some time ago, the concern is a paying one." At Basingstoke, the shareholders were told that the effect of a former reduction, "was a large increase in the consumption, more than adequate to the difference in price."

We meant to have comprehended much more matter in our present report of progress, and especially with regard to the active stir which prevails in various quarters, in consequence chiefly of the government surveyors being now again at work in the collection of evidence for and against such bills as those of "The Bristol and Clifton Gaslight Amendment Act," the "Acts relating to the Southampton Gaslight and Coke Company," and the "Southampton Consumers' Gaslight and Coke Company," the "Worcester New Gas Company's Bill," the "Liverpool Gas Companies' Amalgamation Bill," the "Brentford Gaslight Acts Amendment Bill," &c.; but we must content ourselves in the meantime with the mere enumeration.

We cannot conclude, however, without nominal allusion at least to the warm discussion at the Doncaster gas meeting; to the *resolution* of the pavement commissioners at Winchester, to take the hint we gave, by "advertising for tenders for the lighting of the town," in the face of the gas company, and their enormous charge of 11s. which is thus working out its own cure, as the consumers seem now resolved *not* to be contented with the offer or promise of 9s. as a 'reasonable charge;' also to the progress of the Tottenham and Edmonton Gaslight Company, who have taken possession of the works recently erected, and introduced the use of gas to a large extent among private families; and, finally, to the even still recurring introduction of gas into such new, or rather primitive and antiquated localities, or towns, as Bognor, Cradley, &c. Soon, we hope, shall we have the satisfaction to speak of those *private dwellings* into which it has not yet penetrated, just as we now have occasion to speak of antiquated towns like these; and we are glad to recognise such pioneers in *this* good work as Mr. Rutter, whose *brochure* on the "Advantages of Gas-light in Private Houses," now lies before us, and to which we shall have a more appropriate opportunity again to allude.

THE INSCRIPTIONS ON MONTACUTE HOUSE.

A READER remarks,—"In THE BUILDER for January 22nd, in the article on Montacute House, were given 'A few inscriptions on the building, illustrative of ancient hospitality.' They are—

"Through this wide opening gate
None come too early, none return too late."
"And yours my friend."

And—

"Welcome the coming
Speed the parting guest." &c.

Reading Pope's poems the other day, in the satire addressed to Mr. Bethel, I noticed nearly similar lines. Now, I think it improbable that such a poet as Pope should steal from a door, or a "north wall," and *probable* that the builders of the said wall and door, took a hint from Pope. If such be the case, how are we to account for the discrepancy in dates? Montacute House "was commenced in 1580, and finished in 1601." My book says Pope was not born till 1688!

Pope's lines (Imitations of Horace, Book II. satire 2") are,—

"Fortune not much of humbling me can boast;
Though double-fas'd, how little have I lost!
My life's amusements have been just the same,
Before and after standing armies came.
My lands are sold, my father's house is gone;
I'll hire another's: is not that my own,
And yours, my friends, through whose free opening gate
None comes too early, none departs too late;
(For I, who hold sage Homer's rule the best,
Welcome the coming, speed the going guest).
'Pray heaven, it last!' cries Swift, 'as you go on.
I wish to God this house had been your own:
Pity to build without a son or wife:
Why, you'll enjoy it only all your life.'
Well, if the use be mine, can it concern one,
Whether the name belong to Pope or Vernon?"

The inscriptions at Montacute are *incised*, if we remember rightly, and were doubtless copied from Pope after the completion of the building.

IT'S AN ILL-WIND THAT BLOWS NO ONE ANY GOOD.—The disorderly crowds in Trafalgar-square have swept away the hoarding from the base of the Nelson column! It needed a super-natural interposition.

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